

# ASIA PACIFIC PRIVACY AUTHORITIES MEET IN MEXICO

*Joy Liddicoat, 9 January 2017*

The 46<sup>th</sup> Asia Pacific Privacy Authorities Forum (APPA) was hosted by the National Institute for Transparency, Access to Information and Personal Data Protection (INAI), in Manzanillo, Mexico, from 30 November to 2 December 2016.

New Zealand's Office of the Privacy Commissioner is an active member of the Forum and has contributed to a variety of work over many years. It was a privilege for me to have the opportunity to represent the Office at this meeting, and to participate in the Forum for the first time.

The Forum coincided with the announcement Mexico's new General Act of Personal Data Protection and it welcomed a new member – the National Privacy Commission of the Philippines which become the 20<sup>th</sup> privacy and data protection authority to join APPA.

The Governor of the State of Colima, Ignacio Peralta, opened the Forum, followed by a keynote speech from Prof Joseph Cannataci, the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the right to privacy.

Prof Cannataci, who visited New Zealand for Privacy Week in 2016, stressed privacy is a universal and fundamental human right and highlighted a number of countries where the right to privacy is under threat. He called for governments not to “reinvent the wheel” in responding to new regulatory challenges, but to consider instead better enforcement of existing laws.

The Forum included a parallel open session attended by APPA members and observers, data protection authorities from other regions, representatives from Mexican authorities, business, civil society, students and academics.

## ***DISPUTE RESOLUTION***

Dispute resolution was a strong focus of the Forum, particularly the use of technology to improve investigation and dispute resolution processes.

Members shared experiences of introducing “live-chat” technology and use of online social networking to help resolve disputes and answer privacy related questions.

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- Feelings of fairness
- Acknowledgement that this was a highly stressful time for them
- Feeling that they had an opportunity to tell their side of the story and that their story was heard.

We also took the opportunity to talk about the work we have done to improve our complaints process and our priorities for the coming year, including:

- Making sure we take, and are seen to take, individual circumstances into account
- Taking every opportunity to give clear explanations about our process and reasons for the outcome
- Constant striving to improve the clarity of our communications
- Improving online resources

There was interest in our new online tools, AboutMe and AskUs, and we gained useful insights from experiences in Singapore, Canada and Britain (which attended as an invited observer).

Public demand for resources continues to grow and the Forum provides a fantastic opportunity to better understand how our counterparts in the region are responding. Many have a wide variety of educational materials in increasingly modern formats and covering topics as diverse as de-identification, mobile device apps, the Internet of Things, health information data, cybersecurity; and surveillance. Seeing how others are responding to these new developments was extremely helpful and a critical way to ensure that we keep our own services up to date.

## ***JOINT DISPUTE RESOLUTION WORKSHOP***

A highlight for us was the acceptance of a proposal for a joint workshop (to be co-hosted with the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner) on investigation and dispute resolution at the next Forum meeting, APPA 47.

APPA 47 will be hosted by the Office of the Australian Information Commissioner from 10 to 11 July 2017 in Sydney. A side conference, Data + Privacy Asia Pacific, will be held on 12 July 2017. The workshop on dispute resolution will take place following day, on 13 July 2017.

The Executive Committee of the ICDPPC has endorsed this joint workshop as a recognised enforcement cooperation meeting, meaning that participation will be available to privacy authorities outside the Asia Pacific region.

The Forum in Manzanillo was extremely well organised and productive, with a strong secretariat providing good support that enabled members to participate and collaborate in a cooperative spirit.

With a better understanding of international developments, and the clear relevance of these to our work, we start 2017 with some fresh insights into the prospects and challenges in promoting and protecting privacy and some new ideas. Watch this space in 2017!